

GAMEFACE

INDIANS SCO

MAGAZINE

**Omar
Vizquel**

**Jason
Kendall**



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PITT98 GAMEFACE (VIZQUEL)

**SPECIAL
COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE**

Pittsburgh Pirates vs.
Cleveland Indians
June 8 - 10, 1998

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Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Indians

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Power and popularity — It's what Mark McGwire and Willie McGee respectively bring to the St. Louis Cardinals. With fewer at bats per home run than any player in baseball, McGwire has surely captured the attention of Cardinals fans, while McGee continues to capture their hearts during his admitted day-to-day '98 season.



40 MEMORIES OF 1948 — THE SPORTSWRITERS by Jack De Vries

They were voices in print... And they all agreed that there was no better job in sports than writing about the season of the 1948 Cleveland Indians. Before television became the medium of choice, Indians fans hung on to each and every word spoken by the radio broadcasters and written by the sportswriters.



46 MR. CHARISMA by Steve Herrick

Big talent, big heart, and that big contagious smile... Cleveland's love affair with Indians Gold Glove shortstop Omar Vizquel began shortly after the magical season of 1995 when *alter Omar* appeared at the downtown parade and rally following the World Series. He made the fans smile then and hasn't looked back since.



68 HOUSTON ASTROS by Jim Molony

In an effort to ensure that the National League Central Division Champion Astros remain division title contenders in the foreseeable future, ground has been broken at The Ballpark at Union Station in downtown Houston and long-term contracts have been signed to lock up the nucleus of their top players in hopes of continuing the momentum into the year 2000.



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WELCOME TO JACOBS FIELD

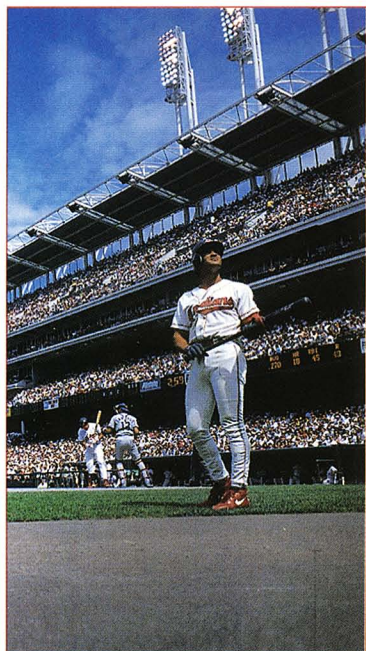


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

"It is our intention to make our home a safe, comfortable, family-oriented facility so every trip to Jacobs Field is most enjoyable."

"We believe these fan ground rules will ensure the intimate environment that we all seek."

— Dennis Lehman, Indians Executive Vice President of Business

Baseball's most important pitch this season won't come from a mound. In an effort to combat drinking and driving, Major League Baseball, together with the Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management (TEAM) coalition, continues to make a comprehensive appeal to fans this year. The message: **PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!**

As part of the TEAM program, each Major League club reviews its alcohol policies and runs public service announcements asking fans to drink responsibly and warns them against the consequences of drinking and driving.

The Cleveland Indians want you safe, because we want you back. Please drink responsibly.

In an effort to make everyone's visit to the Ballpark as safe and enjoyable as possible, a list of guidelines has been developed.

The Indians ask that you follow these guidelines, or be subject to ejection from the Ballpark, and in some cases, subject to criminal prosecution by the Cleveland Police Department.

To ensure that each game is a pleasant experience for each and every guest, the Indians have established the following **"Ground Rules:"**

- Jacobs Field is a non-smoking facility with designated smoking areas. Non-smoking areas include: the entire seating bowl of the Ballpark (including the outdoor seating of Suites and Club Seats); KidsLand; and all public rest rooms. Smoking is permitted in the following areas: Back Yard; Patio area on the Main Concourse; all three concourse levels (Main, Mezzanine, and Upper Deck) on the East Ninth Street side of the Ballpark and Upper Deck pavilion area on the Carnegie side of the Ballpark (all of these locations are open-air areas with picnic tables, concession stands, and rest room facilities nearby); Bleacher Concourse on the Eagle

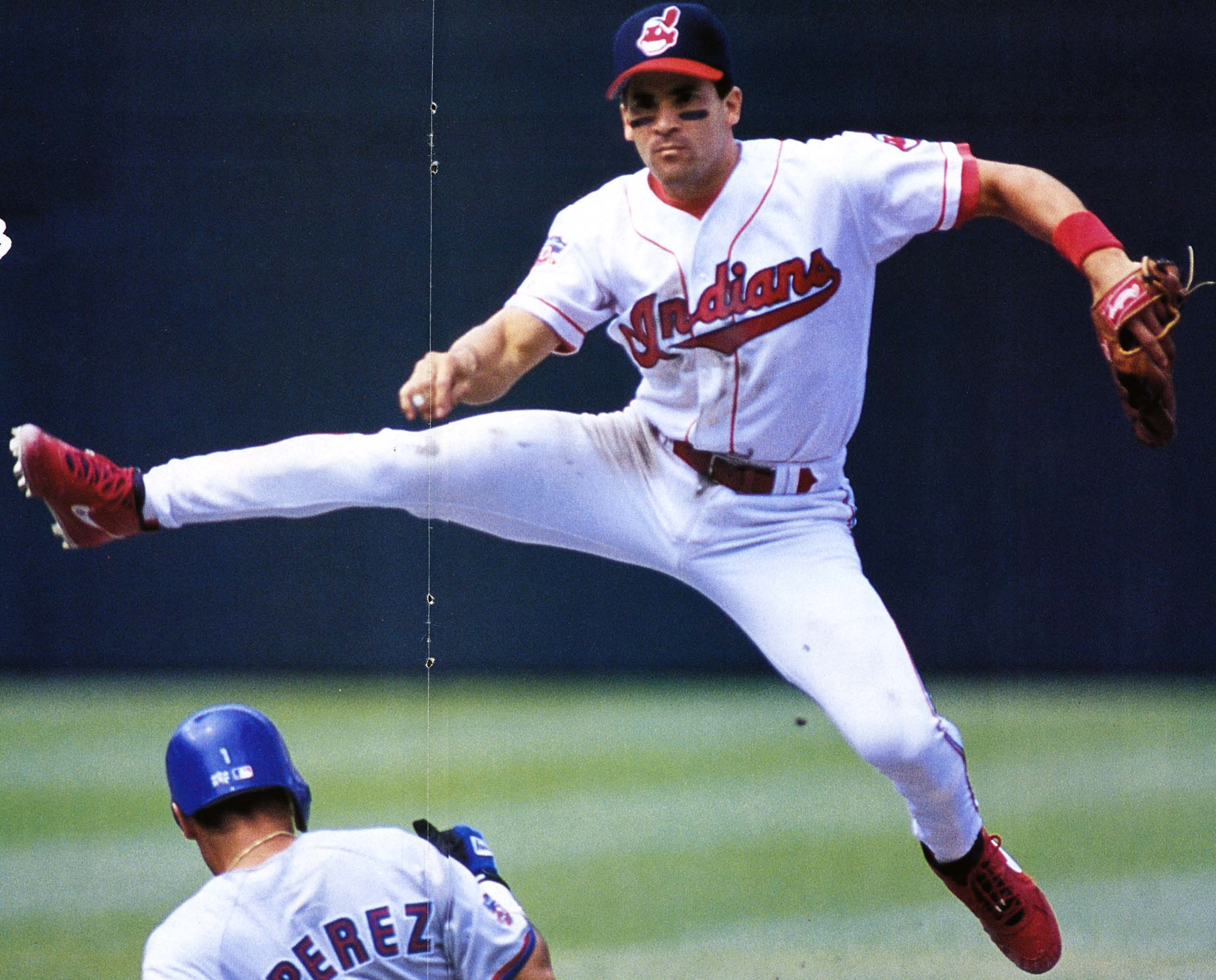
Avenue side of the Ballpark. In addition, the Terrace Club and Club Lounge have both smoking and non-smoking areas. Jacobs Field has signage identifying designated smoking areas for your convenience.

- Cans, glass bottles, plastic beverage containers, thermos bottles, and squeeze bottles are not permitted into Jacobs Field.
- Due to security concerns, hard-sided coolers and containers are not permitted. Soft-sided containers and coolers are permitted.
- Food items and juice boxes are permitted inside the Ballpark, provided they are not inside a hard-sided cooler or container.
- Pets are not allowed inside the Ballpark. However, guide dogs for persons with sight disabilities are permitted.
- The resale (scalping) of Indians tickets is strictly prohibited and subject to prosecution by the Cleveland Police Department.
- Fans are permitted to bring and display banners, provided they do not interfere with the game, obstruct the view of fans, or carry obscene, political or commercial messages. Banners may be hung from the facing of the Upper Deck. Poles and sticks are strictly prohibited.
- Fans may bring small umbrellas into Jacobs Field as long as they do not interfere with other fans' enjoyment of the game. Large golf umbrellas are discouraged.
- Cameras and video recorders are permitted. However, any resale of the photography or video is strictly prohibited. Team name, logos, and players' likenesses are all copyrighted material.
- Persons observed breaking the law (eg. using illegal drugs, or drinking alcohol underage) will be subject to immediate ejection and/or criminal prosecution.
- Persons using obscene or abusive language, or engaging in any other antisocial conduct offensive to those around them, will be asked by Indians personnel to cease this conduct. If the offensive conduct persists, those involved will be ejected from Jacobs Field.
- Persons entering the playing field, throwing or attempting to throw objects onto the field, will be subject to immediate ejection from Jacobs Field and/or criminal prosecution.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or problems, please visit one the Guest Service Centers located at Section 116 of the Main Concourse and in Section 519 of the Upper Concourse, or see one of our hosts throughout the Ballpark. The Indians thank you for your cooperation.



Quang Le 3





OMAR VIZQUEL

MR. CHARISMA

by Steve Herrick

It was a strange sight, all right.

Omar Vizquel, the Indians effervescent shortstop, walked into the clubhouse one night after a game in May with a frown on his face. Vizquel not smiling is a news bulletin around Cleveland, but this time he had a good excuse. Earlier that night, he broke a front tooth while eating an apple. So even though he had the winning hit against the Baltimore Orioles, Vizquel didn't want to go on camera with a tooth missing.

The following night, after a stint in the dentist's chair, Vizquel's smile was back.

"It was the only time I've ever won a game with no teeth and I couldn't be on TV," he said.

It's safe to say Tribe fans have fallen in love with Vizquel's personality. It all started two days after the Indians lost the 1995 World Series to the Atlanta Braves. A rally was held for the team at Public Square and thousands of fans jammed downtown. After

the usual list of speakers talked to the crowd, the players took over. Or in this case, Vizquel took over. The rally for the American League champions became "An Afternoon With Omar." Vizquel told stories and jokes that had the fans roaring. He probably would have been up there until midnight if former teammate Wayne Kirby hadn't given him the hook with an umbrella.

"I don't think anybody knew about that side of him," said Allen Davis, the Indians Director of Community Relations. "It really came out that day."

People had the same thing in mind when they came downtown for the rally after last year's World Series. Spirits were

dragging after the Indians lost Game 7 to the Florida Marlins and people thought a few funny words from Vizquel would make them feel better. But this time the man who cheered up a city needed some cheering up himself. Vizquel was so disappointed about the loss he couldn't attend the rally.

"I didn't want to put on a happy face and deal with people for a couple weeks," he said. "I did the best I could to win it. I felt like I gave everything I had. It was pretty intense."



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

(Left to Right) Allen Davis, infielder Shawon Dunston, and host Omar Vizquel during an afternoon session at Jacobs Field.



"He's a very emotional guy," said Davis. "He took that loss pretty hard. To Omar's credit, he can be hurting and disappointed, but not show it."

Vizquel took his wife, Nicole, and two-and-a-half year-old son, Nico, back to their home in Seattle and returned to his native Venezuela. Vizquel grew up in Caracas, but he didn't even go there. Instead, he went on a nine-day excursion to the jungle. He wanted to see an anaconda, but didn't. So Vizquel enjoyed being around the birds, mosquitoes, and waterfalls.

"I went down there to be with people who didn't know anything about baseball, but one day we were walking in the jungle and I saw another group of tourists," he said. And, believe it or not, one of them was wearing an Indians cap. "He had no idea who I was," a somewhat relieved Vizquel said.

It didn't take long for Vizquel's spirits to come back. By the time he reported to Spring Training, his smile and the bounce in his step were back.

"He loves people," said Davis. **"It's genuine. It's not an act."**

Davis assists players with their personal appearances and Vizquel is one of the players most in demand.

"He's one of the few guys who keeps a calendar in his locker," said Davis. "He writes all of his appearances down so he knows. He has a very strong sense of responsibility. He takes it very seriously."

Vizquel is a go-to guy in good times or bad.

"He made a commitment last season during the playoffs," said Davis. "We had a night game the day before. It was a very late game and we lost. I told him to meet me in the parking lot (at Jacobs Field) at 10:30 a.m. Omar was there. He looked so tired. He was walking and hobbling like an old man, but he kept his commitment. That's the kind of guy he is. He keeps his word."

Davis and Vizquel host **"Omar y amigos"** before every Saturday home game. Children are invited to the show and ask questions to Vizquel and another guest Indians player. The show is taped and then shown on the JumboTron at Jacobs Field during Sunday's pregame.

"Omar's show is so interesting," said Davis. "He actually does research on the players who are going to be on. We had Dave Burba on one show and Omar started rattling off all his stats. He went and looked it all up. I was really impressed."

Davis is the show's emcee, but there's little doubt who the star is.

"I introduce people and go to commercials," he said. "Sometimes I'll give Omar a script on what we want to do on the show. He'll look at it, crumple it up and throw it away. Then he starts to freelance. It really is Omar's personality that drives the show. He comes up with some great lines and the kids say some funny things, too. He loves the show."

Davis said Vizquel is a big help to the Indians young Latin American players.

"He's one of the few guys who keeps a calendar in his locker."

"He writes all of his appearances down so he knows. He has a very strong sense of responsibility. He takes it very seriously."

— Allen Davis
Director of Community Relations

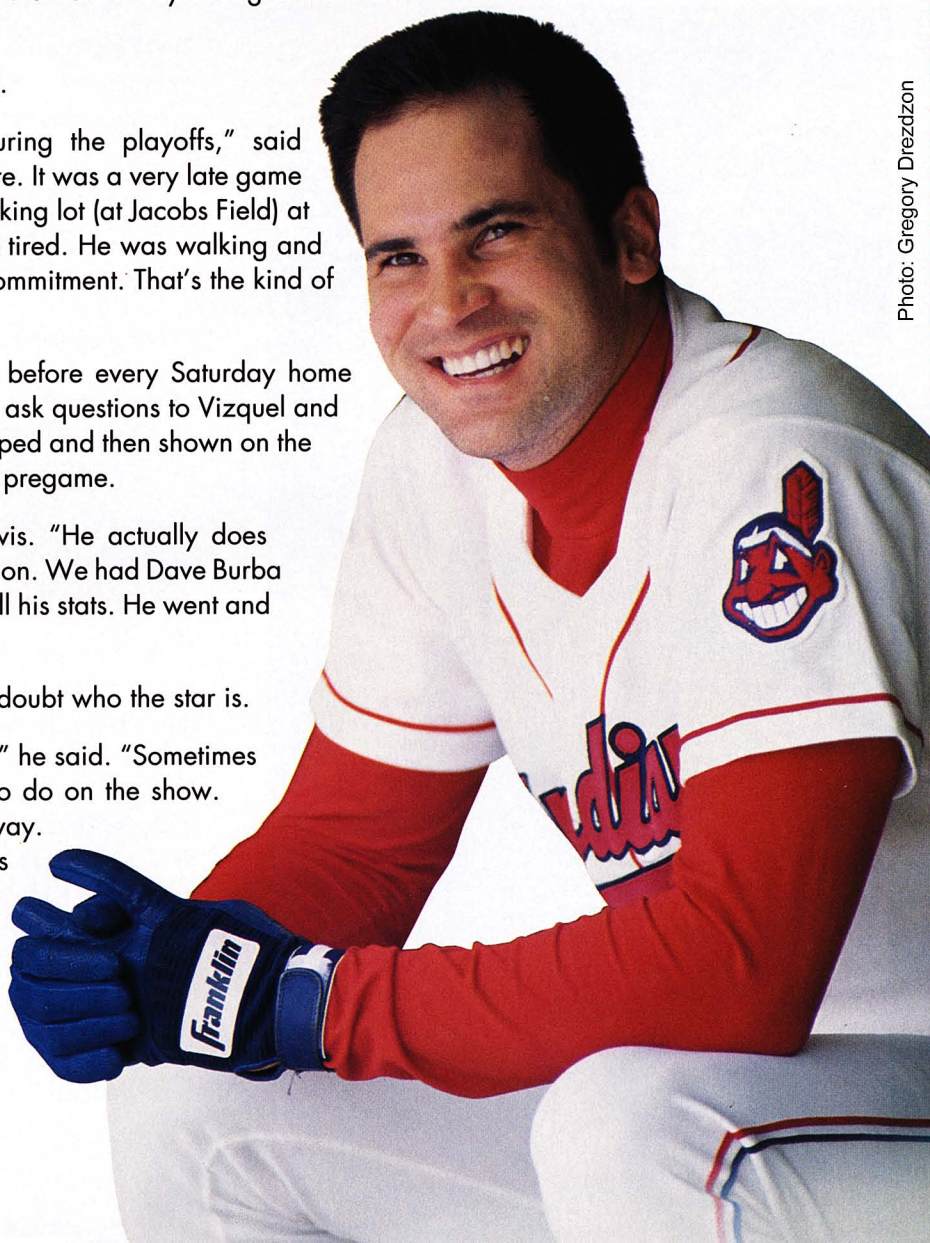


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Omar greeting members of the Roberto Clemente League during a parade (top) and a pregame autograph session (bottom) at Jacobs Field

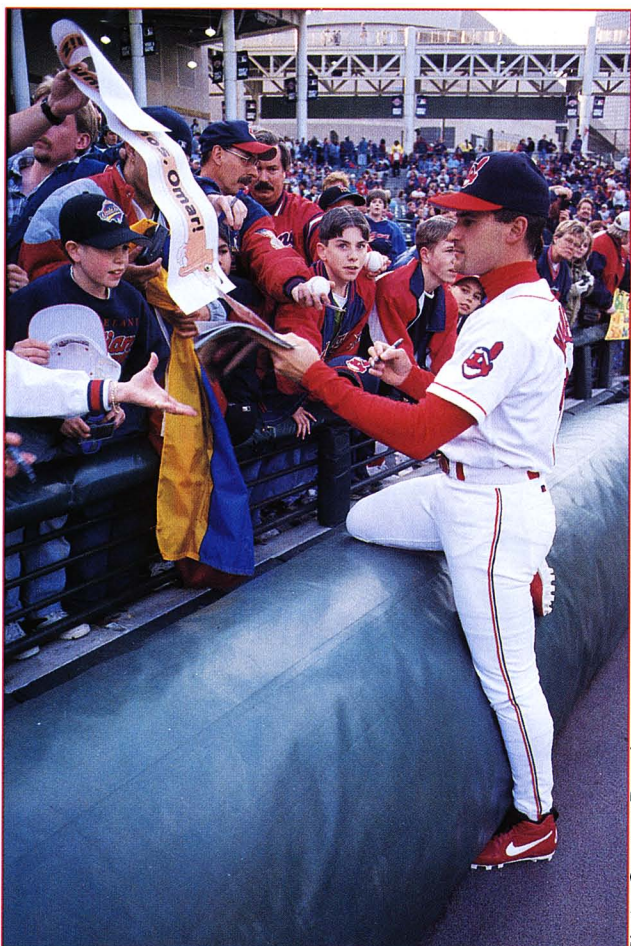


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

"One day I was in the clubhouse and he was talking to Enrique Wilson," Davis said. "He was helping Enrique write and read English words. He was telling Enrique to write down words like pants and socks. It was great to see a veteran player reach out to a young kid. That touched me."

Mike Perez, who lives in Caracas, has known Vizquel for twelve years. Perez is a representative for Lineup, a company that promotes baseball in Venezuela. Lineup produces baseball cards, notebooks, posters, and calendars featuring Venezuelan players in the Major and Minor Leagues. Its latest venture is producing radio broadcasts of games back to Venezuela. They were in Cleveland in May to broadcast three games and will be back in town later in June.

Lineup decided to broadcast Indians games for one reason. **If you think Vizquel is popular here, he's even bigger in his native land.**

"Omar is very, very popular down there," said Perez. "Omar and Andres Galarraga (another Venezuelan who plays for the Atlanta Braves) are the tops, but Omar is the one who they follow."

When Vizquel returns home, he gets a greeting like The Beatles did when they first came to America.

"When Omar flies in, he stays at immigration for an hour or an hour-and-a-half signing autographs," said Perez. "He's a very nice guy. He never says 'no' to anybody down there."

Perez said Vizquel does everything he can to help baseball grow in his homeland. "Omar goes out of his way to promote baseball in Venezuela," said Perez. "He gives a lot of his time."

Perez also realizes how big Vizquel has become here.

"Omar is very involved in the Cleveland community," he said. "You look around the ballpark and you see Omar posters and fans with 'Vizquel' shirts on their backs."

Perez and his group visited several other teams at their Spring Training camps. Vizquel's name came up just about everywhere they went.

"When I spent time with the Seattle Mariners, former Indians first baseman Paul Sorrento and Randy Johnson said to me, 'Have you seen Omar? How's he doing?,'" said Perez. "When I saw Matt Williams, former Indians third baseman, now with the Arizona Diamondbacks, he called me over and asked me how Omar was doing. When I went to the San Francisco Giants camp, I saw former Indians hurler Orel Hershisier. He told me how much he enjoyed playing with Omar and what a great shortstop he is. That's unbelievable."

Perez has attended both of the Indians appearances in the World Series. Even though Vizquel was down after Game 7 last year, he took the time to console second baseman Tony Fernandez, whose 11th-inning error helped the Marlins win the game.

"They really talked a long time," said Perez. "Omar told Tony, 'No matter what happened, you're the best second baseman I've ever played with.' Tony told me what Omar said to him really cheered him up."

Vizquel has won five straight Gold Gloves and has been a big part of the Indians three consecutive American League Central Division titles and two World Series appearances in the last three years. Despite Vizquel's success, Perez said he hasn't changed a bit.

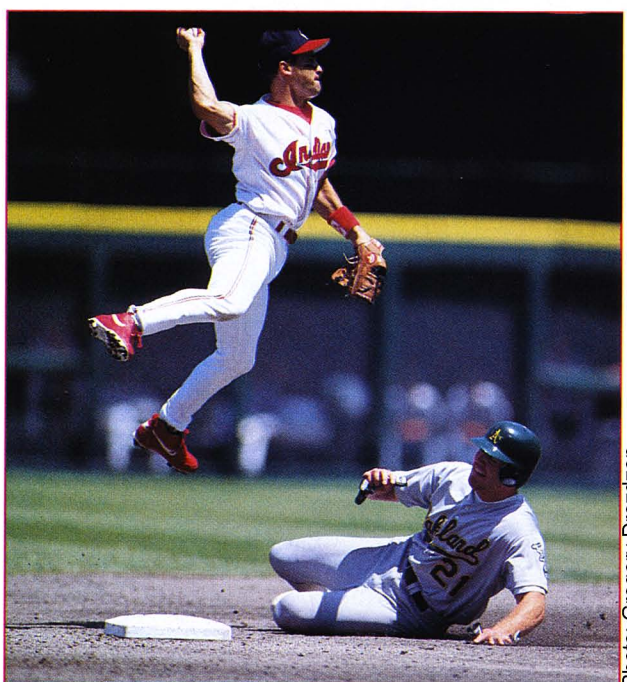


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

"He's the same guy he was when I first met him," said Perez. "He's still the same Omar. He worries about his family and his parents. He's always calling his parents to make sure when they're coming to see their grandson."

When Perez was in Cleveland in May, Vizquel gave him a Mother's Day gift and an order.

"He told me as soon as I got home to take this gift over to his parents' house and give it to his mom before Mother's Day," said Perez. "He said, 'Make sure you get it there on time. Don't be late.'"

Thanks to another family member, Vizquel has some competition when Nico is in town. Nico knows his way around Jacobs Field. Before batting practice, father and son can be seen on the field, usually with Nico in the lead and dad in hot pursuit. Following games, Nico is a popular figure as he visits all corners of the clubhouse.

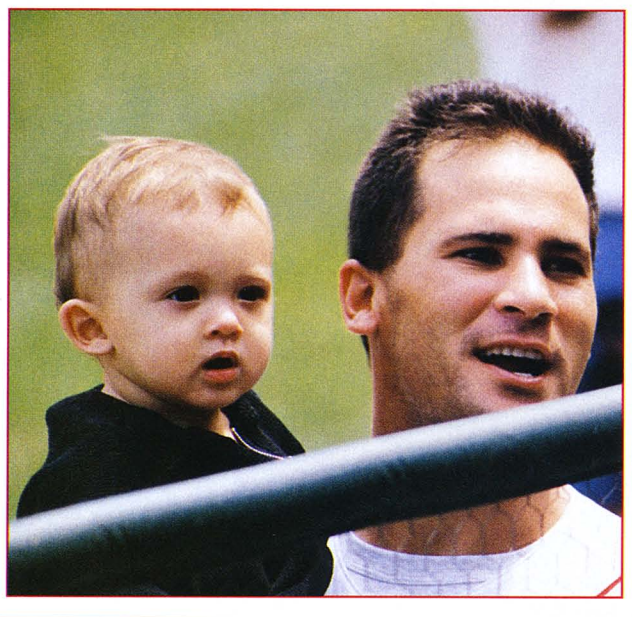
"He's awesome," said Vizquel. "He can shoot a basketball through a hoop. It's hard to have the hand-eye coordination to shoot a basketball or hit a baseball, but he can do it. My mom says he's like me. I think he's going to be a good athlete. He can do everything and he's really active."

Nico is almost like the team mascot.

"We started playing better after Nico got here," said Vizquel. "He's jumping in everybody's locker and throwing shoes all over the place. He helps us out."

Indians fans know all about Vizquel's defense. The bare-handed grabs. The leaping double play turns at second. The running catches in the outfield with his back to home plate. The diving stops in the hole and long throws to first. You name it, Vizquel's done it.

"When he plays winter ball and makes one of those plays, people say, 'That play was worth buying the ticket,'" said Perez. "He has made people appreciate defense."



A leaping double play at second base in progress by Omar (top)
An earlier shot of Omar and son, Nico (bottom)

Before Perez returned home, he asked someone in the Indians video department if he could put together a tape of Vizquel's top defensive plays.

"He said, 'That's easy,'" said Perez. "He went through two or three games and had four or five plays."





Vizquel has no explanation for his defensive wizardry.

"I think I was given talent by God," he said. "I've made a lot of plays I never thought I could make."

Davis finds Vizquel a joy to be around.

"He loves life," said Allen Davis. "I've seen him in physical pain, but it never, ever changes his outward demeanor. He's never crabby and he never complains."

Vizquel is already planning activities outside of baseball.

"He told me one time there are a ton of things he wants to do," said Davis. "He definitely is interested in becoming a personality. When his career is over, he wants to get into TV or acting. He wants to do something in the performing arts."

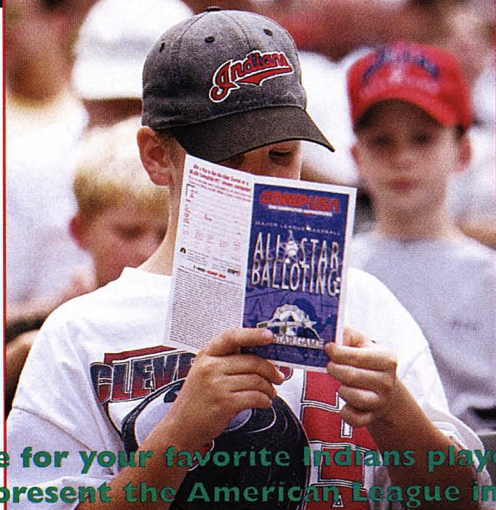
Perez thinks Vizquel may have a future in broadcasting.

Vizquel Con't — Pg. 56

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Visit the SABR Booth at Section 317 in Jacobs Field.

"He really likes it," said Perez. "He'll be the next player who's on ESPN like Harold Reynolds and Joe Morgan."

By the way, there's one more thing Vizquel would like to do at some point in his life.

"He told me once he wants to be a bullfighter," said Davis.

With the health of John Hart and Mike Hargrove in mind, it might be best to put that dream off awhile. But one thing is certain — it would give everyone another entertaining Omar story they would surely remember for a long, long time.

*And if there's anyone who could bring a big, snorting bull to his knees, it's the **Indians charismatic shortstop**.* ♥

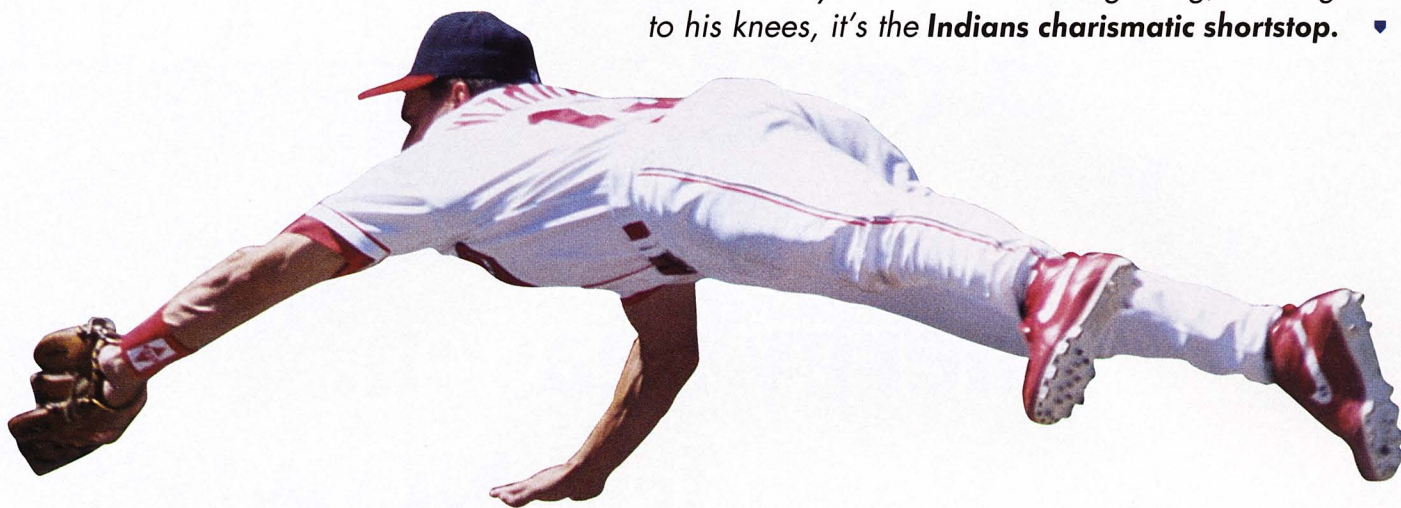


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Enter at Kohl's to Become the Indians Fan of the Month!

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HOW TO SCORE

Baseball fans can enjoy the sport to the fullest extent by keeping track of the game and pinpointing those big plays that bring victory or defeat. All you need is a basic knowledge of the rules.

Although there are countless scoring methods, experts use a simple code based on numbering players by position and tracing action through the use of symbols. It's easy and fun.

In fact, why not devise your own scoring system with the basic suggestions on this page.

One such suggestion on player substitutions is to use a heavy or wavy line under or over a box to indicate a change, either of a player or batter.

If a batter flies to the rightfielder, merely use the figure 9. If it is a foul fly, use 9F.

Now that you are an official "scorer," you can really enjoy baseball games.

TEAM	Pos.	1	2
Rightfielder	9	4-6 W	
2nd Baseman	4	3 ④FO	
1st Baseman	3	=	
Centerfielder	8	SF 8	
Designated Hitter	DH	K	
Leftfielder	7		4-6 —
Catcher	2		DP 4-6-3
3rd Baseman	5		⊖
Shortstop	6		7
Pitcher	1		
TOTALS	R H	1 1	1 2

Walked and was forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop).

Reached first on fielder's choice when runner was forced out, advanced to third on a double by 3rd place hitter, scored on 4th place hitter's sacrifice fly.

Doubled; did not advance further.

Flew out to center field scoring runner on third.

Struck out — end of the inning.

Singled: later forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop in first half of double play).

Hit into double play (2nd baseman to shortstop to 1st baseman).

Hit home run.

Flew out to leftfielder — end of inning.

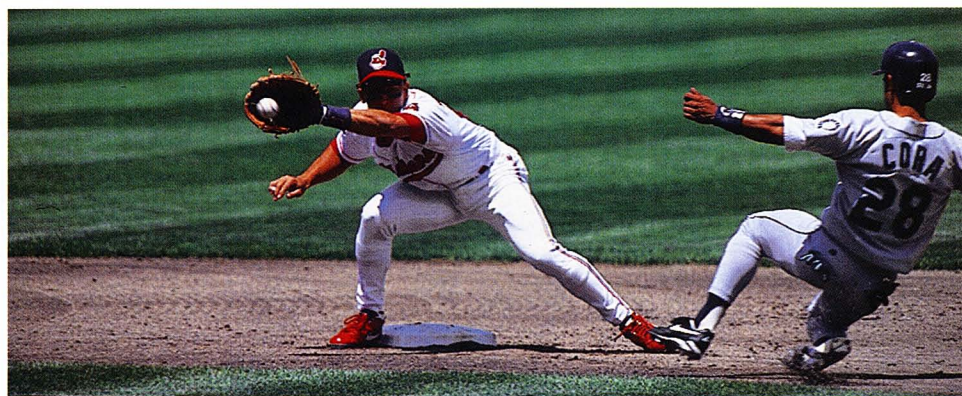


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Can You Score This Play ?

The ball was hit to the shortstop, who threw it to the second baseman. The second baseman was able to force out the runner who had been at first. He then threw the ball to the first baseman to get the batter out, turning a double play.

In this example...

The hitter reached first base on a walk, stole second, advanced to third on a pitcher's balk, and scored on a wild pitch.

BK	SB
⊖	W

Use these SYMBOLS for Plays

Single	—
Double	=
Triple	≡
Home Run	≡≡
Error	E
Foul Fly	F
Double Play	DP
Fielder's Choice	FC
Hit by Pitcher	HP
Wild Pitch	WP
Stolen Base	SB
Sacrifice Hit	SH
Sacrifice Fly	SF
Caught Stealing	CS
Passed Ball	PB
Balk	BK
Struck Out	K
Base on Balls	BB
Forced Out	FO
Intentional Walk	IW



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Selection varies by location.
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BOTTOM OF THE NINTH

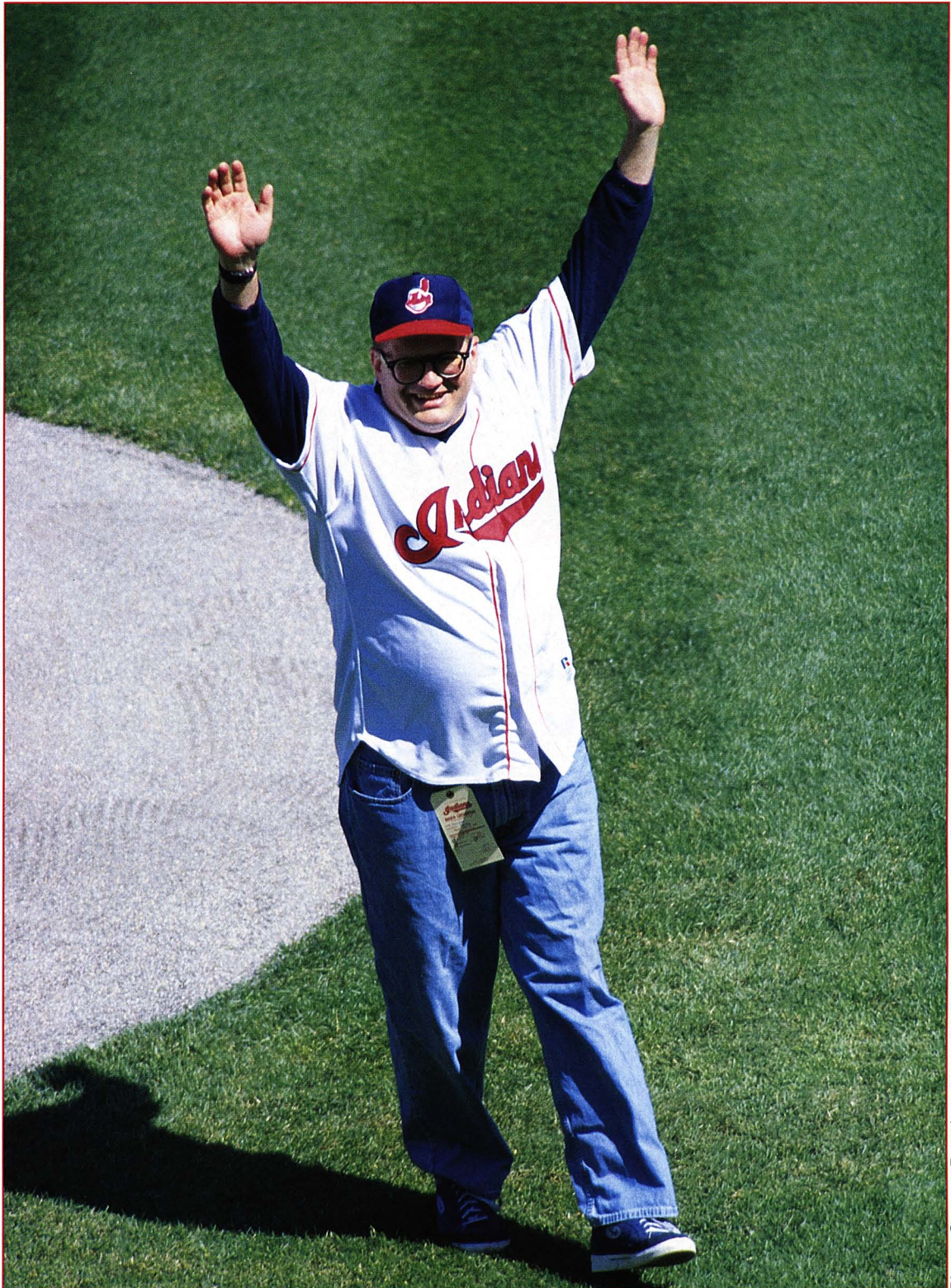


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

OKAY FUNNY GUY, YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR IMPERSONATING A PITCHER!

Comedian and former Clevelander Drew Carey tosses the Ceremonial First Pitch
Opening Day at Jacobs Field — Friday, April 10, 1998